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Towards Policy Integration: Experiences with intersectoral coordination in international and national forest policy

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Abstract

The concepts of policy coordination and integration are theoretically appealing but rather difficult to implement in practice. This paper reviews the emergence of the requirement of policy coordination in international and national forest policy and analyses the Swiss case of the National Forest Programme against the theoretical background of coordination, particularly intersectoral negative and positive coordination. It finds that from a procedural point of view intersectoral coordination attempts result in the opening up of the forest policy sector, formerly rather confined to itself. On a programme level, however, mixed solutions of different forms of coordination are suggested, indicating a preference for bilateral coordination among specific policy sectors. Overall, the coordination attempts in national forest policy indicate that several steps are to be taken in order to proceed towards high level decision for integrated policy strategies in environment and sustainable development.

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1 Introduction

It is rarely the case that problems in the real world respect the borders of legally defined policy sectors or the competencies of single governmental departments. Neither are sectors completely segmented and indifferent of decisions taken in other policy realms (e.g. Sabatier, 1988). Especially after the emergence of new paradigms such as sustainability or sustainable development, some policy realms are urged to address new demands regarding the complexity of objectives, instruments, implementation, and potential impacts on environment, economy and society. Possible ways to address the increasing complexity with policy is to better coordinate them and to proceed with an integrated understanding of policy problems. While in theory concepts such as policy coherence and policy integration are appealing approaches, they are rather difficult to implement successfully in practice. Although there are already numerous studies from supranational to local level of policy integration efforts (e.g. Lenschow, 2002; Stead, et al., 2004), specific policy fields, such as environmental or regional policy, need to continue to work towards more coordination and integration if they want to make sustainable development a reality. It is not astonishing though, that today concepts such as policy cooperation, policy coordination and policy integration appear prominently in order to address complex policy problems related to sustainable development, environmental management, and socio-economic welfare. Conceptually, cooperation, coordination and integration are rather similar and quite distinct at the same time and can be sorted in a hierarchy of terms pointing at different goals and objectives (Stead and Meijers, 2004). On the one hand, they indicate a reorientation of policy making from independent, sectoral policy to coordinated and integrated policy. On the other, their goals range from more efficient sectoral policies (cooperation), to adjusted and more efficient sectoral policies (coordination), to joint new policies (integrated policy making).

Since the mid 1990s, under the paradigm of sustainability and the global programme for action on the environment and development Agenda 21, also forest policy, a policy sector formerly rather confined to itself, has gone through a period of reorientation of policy making procedures, goals and objectives, and measures. Not only did international forest policy forums, such as the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF, 1997) or the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF, 2001), find it necessary that forest policy needs to become more participatory and iterative, it should also work towards coordination with other relevant policy sectors in order to achieve the long term goal of sustainable forest management. With the newly developed policy planning instrument of the National Forest Programme (NFP) nation states are encouraged to introduce such a change in forest policy making towards more adjusted and more efficient forest policy. A National Forest Programme (NFP) is self-contained and includes institutional, procedural and programme aspects. From the beginning, intersectoral coordination appeared as a normative prerequisite for NFP processes. The proposed form of coordination in the NFP aims at establishing a policy process that enables a high level of interaction, bargaining and compromise among a number of policy sectors and actor networks. Overall, it seems that the international forest policy players have internalised and furthered the concepts of coordination and integration.

This paper has the objective to provide more analytical clarity to the quality and scope of efforts taken towards coordination and integration in forest policy at the national level by implementing a National Forest Programme. It starts with a working definition, provides an overview of analytical concepts of intersectoral coordination and policy integration, and derives key concepts to be taken further for analysis of a case of policy coordination efforts in modern forest policy making in Switzerland. The analysis focuses on the policy

planning process and the first mechanisms for the implementation of the NFP. Based on this analysis, we come up with recommendations for improving implementation of NFP and of future reform processes of forest and environmental policy.

2 Working definition and analytical concepts of intersectoral coordination

From a policy perspective, a number of analytical concepts and frameworks do exist to describe and assess coordination and policy integration. In this part, we offer a working definition and recall some useful concepts for further analysis.

Working definition of intersectoral coordination

There are numerous terms used to refer to similar concepts, such as cooperation, coordination, cross-cutting or coherent policy making, or holistic government (Stead, et al., 2004). Policy studies use the term coordination in different contexts, the most important being:

- *Coordination between business, the state and civil society:* In many cases, issues of environmental policy are influenced by the market, state regulation and norms of the community at the same time. In order to generate effective policies, there is a need to coordinate the solutions and mechanisms offered by these three realms. The literature discusses possible approaches, such as economic instruments for environmental policy (Baumol and Oates, 1988), public-private partnerships (Osborne, 2000), or the integration of policy instruments and property rights (Knoepfel, et al., 2001).
- *Multilevel coordination:* Environmental problems often go beyond the borders of nation states, single cities, or clearly delineated administrative districts. There is often a need to coordinate actors and regulations not only of different cities or nation states, but also vertically between international, national and local authorities. Examples include the implementation of international regulation on the national or local level or the coordination between the European Union and other lower levels of government (Hooghe and Marks, 2001; Ansell, 2000). The literature discusses the logic (Putnam, 1988) and potential threats of multi-level governance (Scharpf, 1988). In the context of studies on federalism, the literature distinguishes between horizontal (e.g. between different regions) and vertical (e.g. between nation state and regions) coordination (Hesse, 1978).
- *Intersectoral coordination:* Environmental problems can be influenced by various policy sectors at the same time. The terms of cross-sectoral, intersectoral, or interagency coordination refers to the need of synchronising the strategies, procedures and measures of different policy domains. The literature also mentions the intra-sectoral approach or intra-agency coordination as a means to environmental policy integration: all elements of a single policy domain (e.g. agriculture policy) should comprehensively take environmental protection into account (Lafferty and Hovden, 2003). The intersectoral approach, in contrast, reflects a comprehensive approach towards environmental management and protection over different policy domains at the same time. Whereas single agencies can implement intra-sectoral approaches, the intersectoral approach should be mandated by the government (or several

ministries).¹ In addition, intersectoral coordination can be seen both as an on-going process as well as a snapshot of the degree of policy integration (Peters, 1998):

- Understanding policy coordination as a process means taking into account aspects such as the number of involved actors and sectors, the duration of coordination and the stage of the policy cycle at which it takes place.
- Policy coordination as a degree for integration means reducing redundancy in policy programmes and initiatives, incoherence or inconsistency of programmes as well as identifying the existence of policy gaps. These deficiencies should be eliminated by means of successful coordination.

From the variety of conceptual approaches to policy coordination and integration this paper concentrates on intersectoral coordination for integrating specific elements of different policy domains. Forest policy represents a policy field with strong connections to many other policy fields and where a view to promoting sustainable development is particularly important (Schmithüsen, et al., 2001). Apart from this thematic interface, this paper also refers to the important principle of policies of the European Union that urges the integration of “environmental protection requirements (...) into the definition and implementation of the Community policies and activities (...) in particular with a view to promoting sustainable development” (Article 6 of the Treaty Establishing the European Community).

Analysing the potentials of coordination in general

In order to seize potentials and boundaries of coordination among a number of policy sectors, as required both by environmental policy as well as recent developments in forest policy, it is helpful for our case to draw on the analytical concept of negative and positive coordination popularised by Scharpf (1992; 1993). Scharpf developed the terms of negative and positive coordination in the context of multilevel coordination. However, in our view the concept of negative and positive coordination can also be applied to horizontal coordination between business, the state and the civil society, or between different policy sectors.

- *Negative coordination* implies a low degree of cooperation with single actors aiming at optimising the utility of each activity at a given point in time. Political actors react negatively to policy proposals if they perceive possible costs. The large share of interactions in the decision-making process consists of these negative reactions. The actor in charge of coordination, usually a public entity, becomes the central actor to harmonise claims made by various political actors. Negative coordination aims at producing Pareto-optimal results, i.e. solutions that produce no additional costs for single actors. In other words, only such solutions are likely to pass that are not vetoed by an actor. It is obvious that Pareto-optimal solutions are very limited to promote general welfare, because there are many instances where the general welfare can be optimised only at the cost of some losses to specific actors. In addition, negative coordination offers a large number of veto points and thus tends to maintain the status quo even if the policies in place distribute resources in an inefficient or unjust manner.

¹ Lafferty and Hovden (2003) use the term ‘vertical coordination’ for intra- and ‘horizontal coordination’ for inter-sectoral approaches. We believe that it would be better to use these terms only in the context of multilevel coordination where the terms have been used for more than 25 years.

- *Positive coordination* implies a higher degree of cooperation with actors trying to optimise the utility of a large number of activities over time. Political actors evaluate the options and likely commitments of many actors and parties involved and choose what they consider the optimal solution in a long-term perspective. In contrast to negative coordination, actors decide not only on the basis of single events, but sometimes agree to accept disadvantages in hope of compensations in future interactions. Having developed coordination patterns is an important advantage and, thus, actors behave economically rational if they sometimes accept losses since the creation of coordination patterns is usually quite costly. From a welfare theory's perspective, positive coordination promises far better results for maximising the general welfare than negative coordination. Positive coordination is most likely to be fostered by institutionalised platforms for interaction and if the negotiations focus on issues of common interest.

In the sense of attaining sustainable development, to which it is inherent that all parties from the environmental, economic and social realm are willing to contribute and to compromise, the higher degree of cooperation found in positive coordination seems more promising. However, for specific thematic issues requiring a strong lead of a particular agency or authority negative coordination can also emerge as the preferable form of coordination. Thus, positive and negative do not generally mean “good” or “bad”.

Figure 1 presents an illustration of the different forms of interaction between institutions under negative and positive coordination. In the case of negative coordination, an agency receives independent inputs from various actors. The actors try to foster their interests, support favourable suggestions, and try to veto any proposition worsening their current positions. In the case of positive coordination, the interactions are not independent but relate to established channels of communication. Bargaining is not restricted to single topics but to various issues over a longer period. As a result, actors may sometimes support solutions that, for the moment given, lower their position. Consequently, decision-making enjoys higher degrees of freedom and it is more likely to attain welfare-optimal solutions. Of course, this illustration depicts two ideal-typical models, whereas observers of public policy more often find mixed solutions between these two.

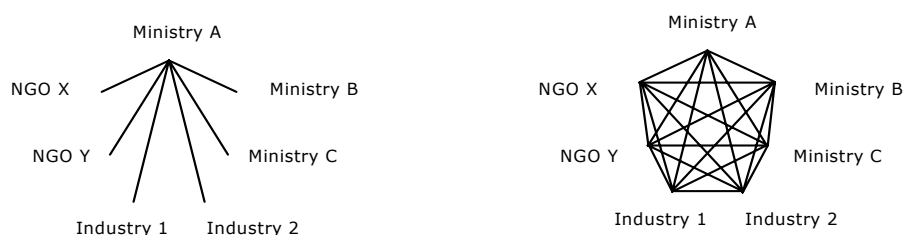


Figure 1: Ideal-type negative and positive coordination (after Scharpf, 1993).

With reference to Scharpf's concept of negative and positive horizontal coordination this paper aims to show how the National Forest Programme (NFP) differs from (more traditional) the “old” ways of policy planning and decision-making in forest policy.

Analysing the potentials of intersectoral coordination

The literature suggests at least two frameworks in order to analyse intersectoral coordination.

Metcalf (1994) and OECD (1996) provide a conducive sequence of steps on a scale of policy coordination (see Table 1). It describes functions, procedures and institutions that foster different degrees of intersectoral coordination. On each of the two ends, decisions are either taken autonomously (step 1) or are based on a real consensus (step 9). Between these two extremes there are opportunities for negative coordination, such as communication, consultation and avoiding divergence (steps 2 to 4). Other steps, such as the interagency search for agreement, or the arbitration of interagency differences (steps 5 and 6), come closest to Scharpf's concept of positive coordination. The list also includes the possibility of the government setting new parameters for agencies and establishing new government priorities (steps 7 and 8) that represent attempts towards policy integration.

This table is helpful to describe the form and level of coordination of a policy integration exercise qualitatively. In this paper we do this for the Swiss National Forest Programme (NFP). Country experiences with NFP processes that follow the NFP requirements, such as participatory mechanisms, intersectoral coordination or iterative process, show that they may reach a level of up to step 5, i.e. interagency search for agreement (Bisang and Zimmermann, 2002). The NFP policy process thus seems to offer opportunities for both negative and positive coordination. It can be assessed as particularly successful and legitimated when attaining a high level on Metcalfe's and OECD's scale.

Table 1: Policy coordination scale (adopted after Metcalfe, 1994; OECD, 1996)

<i>Step</i>	<i>Description</i>
Step 1 Independent decision-making	Each agency retains autonomy within its own policy domain.
Step 2 Communication to other agencies (information exchange)	Agencies keep each other up to date about what issues are arising and how they propose to act in their own areas.
Step 3 Consultation with other agencies	As well as informing other agencies of what they are doing, individual agencies consult other ministries in the process of formulating their own positions.
Step 4 Avoiding divergences among agencies	Ensuring that ministries do not take divergent negotiating positions.
Step 5 Interagency search for agreement (seeking consensus)	Beyond negative coordination to hide differences, agencies work together, through, for example, joint committees and project teams, because they recognise their interdependence and their mutual interest in resolving policy differences.
Step 6 Arbitration of interagency differences	Where inter-organisational differences of view cannot be resolved by the horizontal coordination process, central machinery for arbitration is needed.
Step 7 Setting parameters for agencies	A central organisation of inter-organisational decision-making body may play a more active role by setting parameters on the discretion of individual organisations. These parameters define what organisations must not do, rather than prescribing what they should do.
Step 8 Establishing government priorities	The centre of government may play a more positive role by laying down main lines of policy and establishing priorities.
Step 9 Overall government strategy	This case is unlikely to be attainable in practice.

In a more recent work, Briassoulis (2004) proposes another methodological framework for analysing policy integration which is based on well-established concepts of policy analysis. These concepts can be summarised as the policy design principles of the policy domains. In short, Briassoulis proposes to analyse the relationships between the corresponding elements of the policy designs of two (or more) policy domains, which are the policy objects, goals and objectives, actors and networks, procedures and instruments. These elements can be compared and their relationships analysed, for example, for agriculture and environmental policy. For assessing the degree of policy integration Briassoulis lists over forty criteria. Some of these criteria are specific and operational (e.g. “common and shared research resources”); others remain general (“market-based integration between the two policies”).

Thus Briassoulis suggests analysing intersectoral coordination by comparing various elements of several policies. From the wide range of analytical components this paper focuses primarily on the relationships between actors and actor networks and instruments. A more detailed analysis, as sketched by Briassoulis, is not possible due to the current state of early implementation of the Swiss NFP. The advantage of the approach in this paper, however, is the possibility to include a number of different policy domains (and not only two or three sectors).

Before we enter the field of modern forest policy, we recapitulate that policy integration and policy coordination are complex tasks to be accomplished in policy practice. In order to reduce the complexity, we focus in this paper on the concepts which are both pertinent and parsimonious and use therefore in particular Scharpf's notion on negative and positive coordination for interagency cooperation and coordination suggested by the Swiss NFP.

3 The requirement of coordination in international forest policy

Since the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) at Rio de Janeiro in 1992, forest policy planning at the international and national level has been undergoing substantial changes. These involve basically a conceptual shift from economic-oriented forestry to a more integrated, multi-functional one that emerge with the paradigm of sustainable development. Both the Forest Principles and Chapter 13 of Agenda 21 (UNCED, 1992a, b) laid the basis for a reorientation of the forestry sector towards sustainable forest management. The idea of National Forest Programmes emerged in the follow-up process of UNCED 1992 and was particularly furthered by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO, 1996) and the Intergovernmental Panel on Forests (IPF, 1997). National Forest Programmes (NFPs) are new instruments for formulating, implementing and evaluating modern national forest policy. The FAO broadly characterised NFPs as programmes of action at the national or sub-national level in order to attain sustainable forest management. The IPF, on the other hand, defined them as generic expressions for a wide range of approaches to the process of planning, programming and implementing forest activities in countries. It formulated specific proposals of action for NFPs. According to IPF it is important for the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of national forest programmes to take into consideration seven key requirements. These are the following: consistency with national, sub-national or local policies and strategies, and, as appropriate, international agreements; partnership and participatory mechanisms to involve interested parties; recognition and respect for customary and traditional rights of, inter alia, indigenous people and local communities; secure land tenure arrangements; holistic, intersectoral and iterative approaches; ecosystem approaches that integrate the conservation of biological diversity

and the sustainable use of biological resources; and adequate provisions and valuation of forest goods and services. Most of these requirements work towards an integrated approach to sustainable development described in sections one and two.

Since 1997 a great number of countries have embarked on developing and implementing NFPs. Simultaneously, the international policy discussion on this new forest policy planning instrument continued (IFF, 2000; UNFF, 2001). For Europe, it was in Vienna in 2003, when the fourth Ministerial Conference on the Protection of Forests in Europe (MCFPE) issued a resolution on “Strengthen[ing] synergies for sustainable forest management in Europe through cross-sectoral cooperation and national forest programmes” (MCPFE, 2003). Consensus was achieved on the definition of a NFP, that “constitutes a participatory, holistic, intersectoral and iterative process of policy planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation at the national and/or sub-national level in order to proceed toward the further improvement of sustainable forest management as defined in Helsinki Resolution H1, and to contribute to sustainable development” (MCPFE, 2003: 10). Resolution V1 is a milestone for further developments in national forest policy planning in European countries. It was acknowledged that NFP processes are an important means in strengthening the coherence and synergies within the forest sector as well as between the forest sector and other sectors. Intersectoral coordination was found essential to facilitate coordination and adjustment among forest relevant cross-sectoral issues. Ministers and high level representatives of forty European countries and the European Community signed the Resolution.

Among other requirements, intersectoral coordination thus appears as key element of modern forest policy planning in Europe and features prominently among the key requirements chosen for implementation of individual NFPs. Country experiences until 2004 show, however, that in comparison to other requirements, particularly participatory mechanisms, iterative planning and the adoption of an ecosystem approach, intersectoral coordination is pursued less frequently (Bisang and Zimmermann, 2002; Humphreys, 2004). Despite the fact of its prominent appearance in key documents in both international and national policy, intersectoral coordination seems to be difficult to implement consistently, not only due to the lack of support of target sectors. It appears that an old policy sector, such as forest policy, may be well aware of the importance of intersectoral coordination but that it often tends to face difficulties in clarifying and redistributing competences and responsibilities.

4 Efforts in policy coordination for the environment and sustainable development

In recent years, Switzerland has developed a number of procedural and institutional approaches with the potential to foster coordination and policy integration, mostly in the environmental, spatial planning and construction sector. On a policy programme level Switzerland developed, for example, an integrated Landscape Concept (BUWAL and ARE, 1999) and a Strategy for Sustainable Development (Schweizerischer Bundesrat, 2001). The Landscape Concept is binding for the public authorities. It outlines responsibilities and obligations of the federal offices for individual policy sectors as well as coordination requirements for plans and projects at the federal level. Thirteen sectors are involved in implementing the Landscape Concept in a coordinated manner.² The

² Sectors involved in implementing the Landscape Concept are: National Infrastructure; Energy; Sports, Recreation and Tourism; Defence; Agriculture; Aviation; Protection of Nature, Landscape and Cultural

Landscape Concept shall be realised until 2006. Also the Strategy for Sustainable Development outlines cross-sectoral strategies and measures. As early as 1993 an Interdepartmental Panel was created to coordinate and implement the Swiss obligations of UNCED 1992, which is today situated in the Federal Office for Spatial Development, established in 2000. Current policy programmes in sectors such as agriculture or forestry fall under these two major federal strategies. This is also the case for the Swiss NFP.

On the policy implementation level, the federal administration is obliged to follow a number of legal standards for coordinating tasks where more than one agency is involved. In order to streamline authorisation and decision making procedures in environmental and spatial planning and construction the so-called Federal Coordination Law was issued (Marti, 2000). It makes the coordination among several sectoral authorities mandatory, whereas before each sectoral authority could file its own report regarding an authorisation process. It herewith follows the “principle of concentration”, meaning that although there are several laws only one decision, including all domains, will be relevant.

Overall, coordination efforts at the national level in Switzerland are still relatively recent and do not go across the entire spectrum of policy sectors. It is still common, that policy sectors proceed rather independently although a certain level of deliberation with other sectors is usually realised. Also in sectors, such as forest policy, closely linked to environmental, spatial planning and regional development, coordination attempts represent rather a novelty than the norm. Moreover, these new experiences bear both chances of learning processes for as well as risks of a deadlock of entire policy programmes.

5 Coordination in the Swiss National Forest Programme

Coordination as a process

With the National Forest Programme the forest policy sector in Switzerland seems to have embarked on new paths regarding participatory and coordinated policy making in order to attain the overall goal of sustainable forest management. This development can be seen as a reaction to the multiple demands on Swiss forest from civil society, environmental organisations, and forest enterprises at the end of the 20th century. A brief sketch of recent changes and characteristics shall provide some basic information of this old Swiss policy sector.

Having its origin in the late 19th century, Swiss forest policy mainly supported two goals until the late 1970s, i.e. lumbering and forest cover protection. However, forestry came under pressure in the early 1980s. On the one hand, lumbering generated losses as a result of low timber and high wage costs, and an extremely fragmented forest ownership structure. On the other hand, the environmental awareness of the urbanised population in Switzerland was growing. It increasingly supported nature protection and began to demand more ecologically diversified forests (BUWAL, 1999). At the same time, triggered by the phenomenon of the “die-back of the forest”, the federal state doubled its expenses for the forestry sector to about €100 Millions per annum (with a peak of an amount of € 150 Millions in 1990) (Bundesamt für Statistik and BUWAL, 1998). Due to the substantial federal support of the Swiss forestry sector, it was for a long time confined to its own sectoral tasks and did not do much to coordinate its policy with

Heritage; Spatial Planning; Regional Policy; Traffic; Forest; Hydraulics; and Hydropower (BUWAL and ARE, 1999).

other sectors, such as agriculture, energy, or spatial planning. In the 1990s, however, societal attitudes towards the forest, the precarious economic situation of the Swiss wood industry and forest enterprises, and concepts such as sustainable development and sustainable forest management gave rise to a new debate concerning Switzerland's forest policy. The argumentations within this debate are rather controversial. Some representatives of the forestry and wood industry find that financial support for silvicultural measures should be extended or maintained, but other forestry measures should be deregulated. Other parts of the forestry community and nature conservationists argue that the federal forest policy should put more emphasis on nature protection measures. Most of the political actors outside the forestry community, i.e. members of parliament and the federal government, find that forest policy should cost less and be concentrated mainly on maintaining the health and vitality of protection forests to manage natural hazards. Within this general debate about the future of Swiss forest policy the Swiss Forest Agency promoted the development and implementation of a National Forest Programme (NFP) in the beginning of 2000.

The Swiss NFP was officially launched in the beginning of 2002. The Swiss Forest Agency took the lead in establishing the NFP, officially mandated by the Federal Department of Environment, Traffic, Energy and Communication (DETEC). Within the Swiss Forest Agency the NFP was primarily promoted by members personally involved in meetings of the international forest policy forums, such as the IPF, IFF and UNFF.³ In their view, the NFP was important to meet international obligations and the overarching goal of sustainable development in general, and sustainable forest management in particular. They tried to address key requirements of NFPs, such as participatory mechanisms, intersectoral coordination, ecosystem approach, and monitoring and evaluation.

The Forest Agency also defined the organisational structure of the NFP. It was *directed* by four members of the Forest Agency and the Swiss Agency for Environment, Forests and Landscape (SAEFL) of which the Forest Agency is a part. Main substantial work was delegated to eight *working groups* on six identified focus areas. These correspond with the six focus areas defined in the general guidelines for the sustainable management of forests in Europe (MCPFE, 1993). They include the topics of forest resources, forest health and vitality, productive function, biodiversity, protective function, and socio-economic functions. The working groups assembled the federal and cantonal offices, forest enterprises, forest owners, wood industry, engineering, research institutes, and environmental and civil society organisations. All working groups were directed by members of the Forest Agency, who were responsible for working group reports on the basis of which synthesis reports were then written. The synthesis reports provided the basis for subsequent discussion in the NFP forum. The *forum* assembled members of parliament and (political) representatives of the above identified forest stakeholders. It was the arena where the forest-specific discussions of the working groups were debated within the general political context. It was again directed by representatives of the Forest Agency, supported by a professional moderator and assisted by a scientific advisor. Altogether, more than 130 people were involved in working groups and forum discussions, enabling a so-called multi-stakeholder dialogue.

³ IPF: Intergovernmental Panel on Forests; IFF: Intergovernmental Forum on Forests; UNFF: United Nations Forum on Forests. IPF and IFF were ad-hoc organisations with a temporary mandate, whereas the UNFF is a new permanent institution of the United Nations. IPF, IFF and UNFF chronologically followed each other as forest policy agencies at the international policy level.

In the attempt to better coordinate policy among the sectors, the NFP management board invited representatives of other policy sectors to participate in forest policy discussion and formulation. Its goal was to integrate and coordinate forest policy concerns with other sectoral policy frameworks. The working group on forest resources, for example, was attended by representatives of the Federal Offices for Agriculture and Spatial Development. Intersectoral coordination was especially sought in the NFP forum. Apart from the representatives of the Swiss Agency for Environment, Forests and Landscape (SAEFL), representatives of the Federal Offices for Agriculture, Energy, and Spatial Development as well as a member of the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs participated in the policy discussion and formulation process (Projektleitung WAP-CH and BHP - Brugger und Partner, 2004). These federal administration representatives, together with cantonal office members, members of parliament, environmental and civil society organisations, researchers, and stakeholders from the wood industry and forest enterprises, elaborated a proposal for Switzerland's future forest policy. At the end of 2003, the NFP outlined 15 thematic goals for sustainable forest management in Switzerland (Projektleitung WAP-CH and BHP - Brugger und Partner, 2004). These 15 thematic goals range from the improvement of the forestry and wood industry to biodiversity conservation and should be attained by 48 strategic directions and 132 measures.

From a procedural point of view, the NFP thus adopted participatory and coordination mechanisms to include a large number of stakeholders and to start the search for interagency agreement (step 5 in Table 1). Despite these efforts, the Swiss Forest Agency and the SAEFL respectively appeared as the most important and directing actor with a total of about 20 participants in the NFP process (Zimmermann and Zingerli, 2004). It is important to note, however, that the degree of openness of a Swiss forest policy process has probably never been that high. In former forest policy processes the discourse was much narrower and suited primarily a selected group of forestry actors. With the NFP and the adoption of key elements such as participation and intersectoral coordination, forest policy discussions have substantially opened up and have gone beyond the typical administrative and thematic boundaries of the forestry sector.

Coordination as degree of integration

According to Article 1 of the Swiss Federal Forest Law, a forest is not only considered as the production factor for wood. It has multi-functional meaning and provides important services for other sectoral policy frameworks such as environmental protection, biodiversity conservation, protection of settlements from natural hazards, carbon sequestration, energy, recreation, and education. In order to fulfil the tasks of a multi-functional forest policy and to optimally coordinate diverse claims on the forest, a modern forest policy should work to strengthen intersectoral cooperation and coordination between sectors as well as federal and cantonal offices where decisions concerning the forest are already being taken. These often involve changes in the forest resources that impact on landscape and ecological processes.⁴

⁴ For example, the structural change in Switzerland's agriculture contributed to an abandonment of production in marginal areas. In these places the forest has grown back rapidly. New tasks for landscape management and natural hazard prevention for settlements arise. The structural change in agriculture, intrinsically linked to policy guidelines of agricultural policy, consequently implies new challenges for a forest policy that adhere to the concept of multi-functional forests.

The final programme formulation was prepared by the NFP management board and based more or less on a consensus between the members of the forum. With composition of the forum and the exchange between members of parliament from with different party origin, federal offices, cantonal authorities, and public and private institutions, organisations and enterprises between the forest stakeholders enabled an interagency search for agreement, mentioned before in Table 1. In terms of procedures and process, a certain degree of intersectoral coordination, that stimulated positive coordination, was therefore achieved.

Looking at intersectoral coordination in terms of policy contents and future implementation scenarios we also get insights into the degree and potential of policy integration among a number of policy domains. On the one hand, there is clearly the tendency to continue in the old style of the rather closed policy sector that seeks primarily bilateral coordination in furthering its traditional concerns, such as production or protection. This can also be illustrated by Figure 2 which depicts a common idea of the forest sector and other forest-relevant policy sectors used in the NFP process, and which was actually cited in the final report of the NFP. The forest (and wood) sector is in a central position, surrounded by “satellites” of other policy sectors. This figure implies that the forest sector only makes a proactive approach towards policy integration if it considers it necessary.

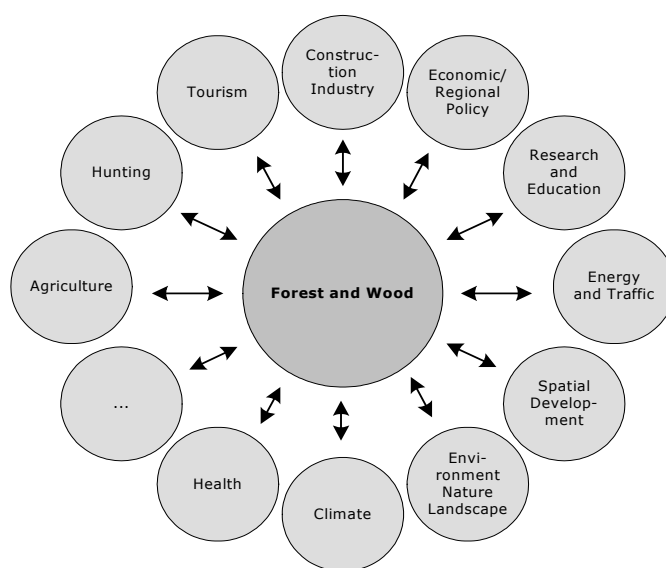


Figure 2: Forest and forest-relevant policy sectors
(GEO Partner AG, 2003, cited in Projektleitung WAP-CH and BHP - Brugger und Partner, 2004).

On the other hand, and especially when looking at the suggested forms of coordination in policy implementation, outlined in the final document of the NFP, intersectoral coordination can both take the form of negative and positive coordination. The two examples of the thematic focus areas of production and forest area protection do illustrate this well (see Figure 3). Depicted according to the style of Figure 1, we see that a number of different policy sectors, represented by federal agencies, will be necessary to coordinate their activities in order to achieve the respective strategic and thematic goals.

The form of coordination suggested for the two focus areas, however, is fundamentally different.

In the focus area of the productive function the SAEFL takes the lead in furthering the goal of a productive Swiss forestry. It collaborates primarily on bilateral terms with the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs and the Federal Offices for Energy, Spatial Development, Statistics, Construction and Logistics, and Housing in order to promote wood, for example, as a precious national construction material. As such, the demand for domestic wood could strengthen Swiss forestry and wood industry. The suggested measures for policy implementation for attaining the goals in the focus area of productive function result in an almost ideal-type form of negative coordination.

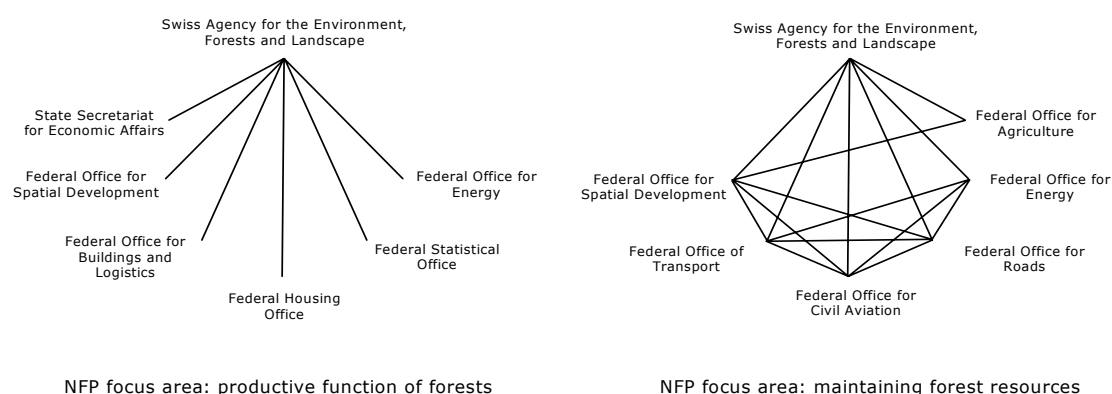


Figure 3: Forms of intersectoral coordination for attaining thematic goals as defined in the final report of the NFP.

In the focus area of forest resources, i.e. protection of the forest coverage, the suggested responsibilities for policy implementation lie primarily among a set of federal offices, including the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs and the Federal Offices of Spatial Development, Transport, Roads, Civil Aviation, Energy, and Agriculture. They should seek ways to integrate policy measures concerning the increase of or pressure on the forest coverage in Switzerland by processes such as structural change in agriculture or increasing construction activities in lowland agglomerations. The tasks touch the scope of so many different policy domains that a high level of interaction and the willingness to arbitrate is crucial. In contrast to the focus area of productive function, the type of coordination in this focus area should correspond with the form of positive coordination.

From the point of view of policy integration of forest policy with other policy domains, the NFP thus suggests different forms of coordination for attaining the thematic goals of each individual focus area. Generally, these come to lie between the two ideal-type forms of negative and positive coordination and suggest mixed solutions for different focus areas.

6 Conclusions

In this paper we have shown that the international attempts for sustainable development have also touched the rather traditional forest policy sector and sensitised it, to some degree, for more holistic approaches to forests as well as to the ideas of policy integration

and coordination. The theoretical literature and numerous studies indicate that the need for policy coordination is widely accepted and found to be relevant for more effective and efficient as well as legitimated policy. The Earth Summit of Rio 1992 and the subsequent strengthening of the paradigm of sustainable development have enforced the call for more coordination among all sectors, those touching on environmentally relevant issues in particular. However, in old policy sectors, such as forest or agriculture policy, coordination is not only due to its complexity but also because of historical characteristics and legal fixations rather difficult to implement. New policy planning instruments, such as the here discussed National Forest Programme (NFP), are therefore helpful to rethink sectoral boundaries and attitudes.

A number of countries all over the world have embarked on planning, formulating and implementing NFPs. Many of these national forest policy processes operate according to a number of forms and concepts of coordination. Participation, ecosystem approach, multi-level governance, and intersectoral coordination are key requisites of this new planning instrument that serves the overall goals of sustainable forest management and sustainable development.

Our case study of the Swiss NFP reveals, especially from a procedural point of view, that the forest policy process opened up and gave room for other policy sector representatives. In terms of interaction and exchange during the early stages of NFP formulation, the form of coordination largely corresponded with the notion of positive coordination. On the programme level, the proposals for implementation indicate, however, that coordination for attaining the fifteen thematic goals will lie somewhere between the ideal-type form of negative coordination as well as mixed solutions between negative and positive coordination. Two important reasons for that may be the uncoordinated timing with other comparable programmes in sectors such as agriculture, energy, or spatial development, if they do exist, and the lack of decision by a relatively high administrative body, if not by the federal government. Better timing and high level decision would benefit all sectoral planning processes in this area, especially because more or less the same agencies and federal departments are usually involved. In the case of the NFP, decision making is still largely situated at a rather low level of the federal administration, and higher level directives are yet to be awaited. Generally, more coordination among sectors and at higher administrative level for parallel processes of policy programme planning would support coordination efforts, such as the ones taken with the NFP.

Overall, our case clearly illustrates the path towards policy integration as outlined in the literature (Metcalf, 1994; OECD, 1996; Stead and Meijers, 2004). It is necessary to take several steps. In the case of the Swiss NFP, policy coordination in the future needs to move up from interagency search for agreement to the arbitration of interagency difference. Although the case of the Swiss NFP so far generates mixed results concerning scope and degree of coordination, we conclude with the optimistic view that environmentally relevant policy sectors in Switzerland and other European countries with NFPs are increasingly aware of and take first steps towards policy integration for sustainable development.

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